

Glossary

AGGRADATION: The geologic process by which stream beds, floodplains, and the bottoms of other water bodies are raised in elevation by the deposition of material eroded and transported from other areas. It is the opposite of degradation.

ALEVIN: The life stage of salmonids that occurs after eggs have hatched but before young emerge from the gravel nests where they have incubated. Alevin still have yolk sacs attached to provide them with nutrition within the nest.

ALLUVIUM: A general term for all deposits resulting directly or indirectly from the sediment transport of streams, thus including the sediments laid down in riverbeds, floodplains, lakes, fans and estuaries. ALLUVIAL, adj.

ANADROMOUS: Fish that leave freshwater and migrate to the ocean to mature then return to freshwater to spawn. Salmon, steelhead and shad are examples.

ANTHROPOGENIC: Caused by humans.

ARCINFO: ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) proprietary software, which provides a complete GIS data creation, update, query, mapping, and analysis system.

AERIAL: Having to do with or done by aircraft. Aerial photographs are taken from aircraft equipped with cameras.

BANKFULL DISCHARGE: The discharge corresponding to the stage at which the floodplain of a particular stream reach begins to be flooded. The point at which bank overflow begins.

BANKFULL WIDTH: The width of the channel at the point at which overbank flooding begins.

BASIN: As used in NCWAP, the largest watershed unit for assessment, e.g., the Gualala Basin. Also see watershed.

BED SUBSTRATE: The materials composing the bottom of a stream.

BENTHIC: Living on or in sea, river or lake bottoms.

BOULDER: Stream substrate particle larger than 10 inches (256 millimeters) in diameter.

CALWATER: A set of standardized watershed boundaries for California nested into larger previously standardized watersheds and meeting standardized delineation criteria.

CANOPY: The overhead branches and leaves of vegetation.

CANOPY COVER: The vegetation that projects over the stream.

CANOPY DENSITY: The percentage of the stream covered by the canopy of plants, sometimes expressed by species.

CENTROID: The center of water mass of a flowing stream at any location. This location usually correlates well with the thalweg, or deepest portion of the stream. Sampling in the centroid is intended to provide a reasonably representative sample of the main stream.

CHANNEL: A natural or artificial waterway of perceptible extent that periodically or continuously contains moving water. It has a definite bed and banks, which serve to confine the water.

COAST RANGE: A string of mountain ranges along the Pacific Coast of North America from Southeastern Alaska to lower California.

COBBLE: Stream substrate particles between 2.5 and 10 inches (64 and 256 millimeters) in diameter. Rubble.

COLLUVIUM: A general term for loose deposits of soil and rock moved by gravity; e.g. talus.

CONIFEROUS: Any of various mostly needle-leaved or scale-leaved, chiefly evergreen, cone-bearing gymnospermous trees or shrubs such as pines, spruces, and firs.

CONSUMPTIVE USE OF WATER: Occurs when water is taken from a stream and not returned.

COVER: As regards fish habitat, anything that provides protection from predators or ameliorates adverse conditions of streamflow and/or seasonal changes in metabolic costs. May be Instream cover, turbulence, and/or overhead cover, and may be for the purpose of escape, feeding, hiding, or resting.

DEBRIS: Material scattered about or accumulated by either natural processes or human influences.

DEBRIS JAM: Log jam. Accumulation of logs and other debris.

DEBRIS LOADING: The quantity of debris located within a specific reach of stream channel due to natural processes or human activities.

DECIDUOUS: A plant (usually a tree or shrub) that sheds its leaves at the end of the growing season.

DEGRADATION: The geologic process by which stream beds and floodplains are lowered in elevation by the removal of material. It is the opposite of aggradation.

DEPOSITION: The settlement or accumulation of material out of the water column and onto the streambed. Occurs when the energy of flowing water is unable to support the load of suspended sediment.

DEPTH: The vertical distance from the water surface to the streambed.

DISCHARGE: Volume of water flowing in a given stream at a given place and within a given period of time, usually expressed as cubic meters per second (m³/sec), or cubic feet per second (cfs).

DISSOLVED OXYGEN (DO): The concentration of oxygen dissolved in water, expressed in mg/l or as percent saturation, where saturation is the maximum amount of oxygen that can theoretically be dissolved in water at a given altitude, temperature, and salinity.

DIVERSION: A temporal removal of surface flow from the channel.

ECOTONE: A transition area between two distinct habitats that contains species from each area, as well as organisms unique to it.

EMBEDDEDNESS: The degree that larger particles (boulders, rubble, or gravel) are surrounded or covered by fine sediment. Usually measured in classes according to percentage of coverage of larger particles covered by fine sediments.

ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT DECISION SUPPORT (EMDS): An application framework for knowledge-based decision support of ecological landscape analysis at any geographic scale.

EMBRYO: An organism in its early stages of development, especially before it has reached a distinctively recognizable form.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: In the context of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range other than a species of the Class Insecta determined by the Secretary of the Interior to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of this Act would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man.

EROSION: The group of natural processes, including weathering, dissolution, abrasion, corrosion, and transportation, by which material is worn away from the earth's surface. **EROSIONAL**, adj.

ESTUARY: A body of water where fresh water from a river or stream mixes with sea water.

EXTIRPATION: To destroy totally; exterminate.

EXTINCTION: The death of an entire species.

FILL: a) The localized deposition of material eroded and transported from other areas, resulting in a change in the bed elevation. This is the opposite of scour; b) The deliberate placement of (generally) inorganic materials in a stream, usually along the bank.

FINE SEDIMENT: The fine-grained particles in stream banks and substrate. Those are defined by diameter, varying downward from 0.24 inch (6 millimeters).

FISH HABITAT: The aquatic environment and the immediately surrounding terrestrial environment that, combined, afford the necessary biological and physical support systems required by fish species during various life history stages.

FLATWATERS: In relation to a stream, low velocity pool habitat.

FLOOD: Any flow that exceeds the bankfull capacity of a stream or channel and flows out onto the floodplain; greater than bankfull discharge.

FLOODPLAIN: The area bordering a stream over which water spreads when the stream overflows its banks at flood stages.

FLOW: a) The movement of a stream of water and/or other mobile fluid substance from place to place; b) The movement of water, and the moving water itself; c) The volume of water passing a given point per unit of time. Discharge.

FLUVIAL: Relating to or produced by a river or the action of a river. Situated in or near a river or stream.

FRESHETS: A sudden rise or overflowing of a small stream as a result of heavy rains or rapidly melting snow.

FRY: Small fish, especially young, recently hatched fish.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS): A computer system for capturing, storing, checking, integrating, manipulating, analyzing and displaying data related to positions on the Earth's surface. Typically, a GIS is used for handling maps of one kind or another. These might be represented as several different layers where each layer holds data about a particular kind of feature (e.g. roads). Each feature is linked to a position on the graphical image of a map.

GEOMORPHOLOGY: The study of surface forms on the earth and the processes by which these develop.

GRADIENT: The slope of a streambed or hillside. For streams, gradient is quantified as the vertical distance of descent over the horizontal distance the stream travels.

GRAVEL: Substrate particle size between 0.08 and 2.5 inches (2 and 64 millimeters) in diameter.

GRILSE: see jack.

GULLY: A deep ditch or channel cut in the earth by running water after a prolonged downpour.

HABITAT: The place where a population lives and its surroundings, both living and nonliving; includes the provision of life requirements such as food and shelter.

HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN: In the context of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, a document that describes how an agency or landowner will manage their activities to reduce effects on vulnerable species. An HCP discusses the applicant's proposed activities and describes the steps that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the "take" of species that are covered by the plan.

HABITAT TYPE: A land or aquatic unit, consisting of an aggregation of habitats having equivalent structure, function, and responses to disturbance.

HIERARCHY: A series of ordered groupings of people or things within a system.

HYDROGRAPH: A graph showing, for a given point on a stream, the discharge, stage, velocity, or other property of water with respect to time.

HYDROLOGY: The science of water, its properties, phenomena, and distribution over the earth's surface.

HYDROGRAPHIC UNIT: A watershed designation at the level below Hydrologic Region and above Hydrologic Sub-Area.

HYPOTHESIS: A tentative explanation for an observation, phenomenon, or scientific problem that can be tested by further investigation.

INCUBATION: Maintaining something at the most favorable temperature for its development.

INSTREAM COVER: Areas of shelter in a stream channel that provide aquatic organisms protection from predators or competitors and/or a place in which to rest and conserve energy due to a reduction in the force of the current.

INTERMITTENT STREAM: A stream in contact with the ground water table that flows only at certain times of the year when the ground water table is high and/or when it receives water from springs or from some surface source such as melting snow in mountainous areas. It ceases to flow above the streambed when losses from evaporation or seepage exceed the available stream flow. Seasonal.

JACK: An immature male salmonid (usually a two-year old) that returns to freshwater to spawn. Also known as grilse.

KNOWLEDGE BASE: An organized body of knowledge that provides a formal logical specification for the interpretation of information.

LAGOON: A shallow body of water, especially one separated from a sea by sandbars or coral reefs.

LIMITING FACTOR: Environmental factor that limits the growth or activities of an organism or that restricts the size of a population or its geographical range.

LARGE WOODY DEBRIS (LWD): A large piece of relatively stable woody material having a diameter greater than 12 inches (30 centimeters) and a length greater than 6 feet (2 meters) that intrudes into the stream channel. Large organic debris.

MACROINVERTEBRATE: An invertebrate animal (animal without a backbone) large enough to be seen without magnification.

MAINSTEM: The principal, largest, or dominating stream or channel of any given area or drainage system.

MELANGE: A mappable body of rock that includes fragments and blocks of all sizes, both exotic and native, embedded in a fragmented and generally sheared matrix.

MIGRATION: The periodic passage from one region to another for feeding or breeding.

NETWEAVER: A knowledge-based development system. A meta database that provides a specification for interpreting information.

NUTRIENT: A nourishing substance; food. The term nutrient is loosely used to describe a compound that is necessary for metabolism.

ONCORHYNCHUS: The salmon and trouts genus of the family Salmonidae. They are named for their hooked (onco) nose (rhynchus).

ORGANIC DEBRIS: Debris consisting of plant or animal material.

ORTHOPHOTOQUADS: A combined aerial photo and planimetric quad map (with no indication of contour) without image displacements and distortions.

PERMANENT STREAM: A stream that flows continuously throughout the year. Perennial.

pH: A measure of the hydrogen ion activity in a solution, expressed as the negative log 10 of hydrogen ion concentration on a scale of 0 (highly acidic) to 14 (highly basic) with a pH of 7 being neutral.

PLATE TECTONICS: A theory in which the earth's crust is divided into mobile plates which are in constant motion causing earthquake faults, volcanic eruptions, and uplift of mountain ranges.

PHOTOGRAMMETRY: The process of making maps or scale drawings from photographs, especially aerial photographs.

PRODUCTIVITY: a) Rate of new tissue formation or energy utilization by one or more organisms; b) Capacity or ability of an environmental unit to produce organic material; c) The ability of a population to recruit new members by reproduction.

REDD: A spawning nest made by a fish, especially a salmon or trout.

REFERENCE CONDITIONS: Minimally impaired conditions that provide an estimate of natural variability in biological condition and habitat quality.

RIFFLE: A shallow area extending across a streambed, over which water rushes quickly and is broken into waves by obstructions under the water.

RILL: An erosion channel that typically forms where rainfall and surface runoff is concentrated on slopes. If the channel is larger than one square foot in cross-section, it is called a gully.

RIPARIAN: Pertaining to anything connected with or immediately adjacent to the banks of a stream or other body of water.

RIPARIAN AREA: The area between a stream or other body of water and the adjacent upland identified by soil characteristics and distinctive vegetation. It includes wetlands and those portions of floodplains and valley bottoms that support riparian vegetation.

RIPARIAN VEGETATION: Vegetation growing on or near the banks of a stream or other body of water on soils that exhibit some wetness characteristics during some portion of the growing season.

Rock Slide. Referred to in previous CGS publications as translational/rotational, this slide type is characterized by a somewhat cohesive slide mass and a failure plane that is relatively deep-seated when compared to that of a debris slide of similar areal extent. The sense of the motion is linear in the case of a translational slide, and is arcuate or "rotational" in the case of the rotational slide. Complex versions involving rotational heads with translation or earthflow downslope are quite common.

Rock slides generally involve relatively cohesive bedrock. The bedrock is typically weaker near the surface due to weathering; however, sliding is not restricted to the zone of weathering. Failure commonly occurs along bedding planes, fractures, or other discontinuities in the bedrock. The concentric, downward movement of slide materials generally exposes a near vertical scarp in the head region and, occasionally, along the lateral margins of the slide. Slide materials are characterized by hummocky topography consisting of rolling, bumpy ground, frequent benches, and depressions. The toe of the slide may be steep where slide material has accumulated. Although the removal of root support is not likely to affect the overall stability of the slide mass, large clear-cuts (relative to slide size) could raise the groundwater table and induce instability. The removal of toe materials on smaller slides may reactivate the entire slide area.

RUBBLE: Stream substrate particles between 2.5 and 10 inches (64 and 256 millimeters) in diameter. Cobble.

SALMONID: Fish of the family Salmonidae, including salmon, trout, chars, whitefish, ciscoes, and graylings.

SCOUR: The localized removal of material from the stream bed by flowing water. This is the opposite of fill.

SEDIMENT: Fragmented material that originates from weathering of rocks and decomposition of organic material that is transported by, suspended in, and eventually deposited by water or air, or is accumulated in beds by other natural phenomena.

SERAL STAGES: The series of relatively transitory plant communities that develop during ecological succession from bare ground to the climax stage.

SHEAR: A deformation resulting from stresses that cause contiguous parts of a body to slide relatively to each other in a direction parallel to their plane of contact.

SHEAR STRAIN: A measure of the amount by which parallel lines have been sheared past one another by deformation.

SHEAR ZONE: A tabular zone of rock that has been crushed and brecciated by many parallel fractures due to shear strain.

SILVICULTURE: The care and cultivation of forest trees; forestry.

SMOLT: Juvenile salmonid one or more years old that has undergone physiological changes to cope with a marine environment; the seaward migration stage of an anadromous salmonid.

SMOLTIFICATION: The physiological change adapting young anadromous salmonids for survival in saltwater.

SPAWNING: To produce or deposit eggs.

STADIA RODS: Graduated rods observed through a telescopic instrument while surveying to determine distances and elevation.

STAGE: The elevation of a water surface above or below an established datum or reference.

STRATH: a) An extensive terrace like remnant of a broad valley floor that has undergone dissection; b) A broad valley floor representing a local base level, usually covered by a veneer of alluvium.

STREAM (includes creeks and rivers): A stream is a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation.

STREAM BANK: The portion of the channel cross section that restricts lateral movement of water at normal water levels. The bank often has a gradient steeper than 45 degrees and exhibits a distinct break in slope from the stream bottom. An obvious change in substrate may be a reliable delineation of the bank.

STREAM CLASSIFICATION: Various systems of grouping or identifying streams possessing similar features according to geomorphic structure (e.g. gradient), water source (e.g. spring creek), associated biota (e.g. trout zone) or other characteristics.

STREAM CORRIDOR: A stream corridor is usually defined by geomorphic formation, with the corridor occupying the continuous low profile of the valley. The corridor contains a perennial, intermittent, or ephemeral stream and adjacent vegetative fringe.

STREAM REACH: A section of a stream between two points.

SUBSTRATE: The material (silt, sand, gravel, cobble, etc.) that forms a stream or lakebed.

SUBWATERSHED: One of the smaller watersheds that combine to form a larger watershed.

TAKE: In the context of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

TERRACE: A former floodplain underlain by sediment deposited by a stream when the stream was flowing at a higher level; typically forming a relatively level bench along a valley side adjacent to a recent floodplain.

TERRAIN: A tract or region of the earth's surface considered as a physical feature, an ecological environment, or a site of some planned activity of man.

TERRANE: A term applied to a rock or group of rocks and to the area in which they crop out. The term is used in a general sense and does not imply a specific rock unit.

THALWEG: The line connecting the lowest or deepest points along a stream bed.

THREATENED SPECIES: In the context of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

TOPOGRAPHY: The general configuration of a land surface, including its relief and the position of its natural and man-made features.

TOPOLOGY: The analytical, detailed study of minor landforms, requiring fairly large scales of mapping.

TRIBUTARY: A stream feeding, joining, or flowing into a larger stream. Feeder stream, side stream.

UNDERCUT BANK: A bank that has had its base cut away by the water action along man-made and natural overhangs in the stream.

VELOCITY: The time rate of motion; the distance traveled divided by the time required to travel that distance.

WATER RIGHT: The right to draw water from a particular source, such as a lake, irrigation canal, or stream. Often used in the plural.

WATERSHED ASSESSMENT: An interdisciplinary process of information collection and analysis that characterizes current watershed conditions at a course scale.

WATERSHED: Total land area draining to any point in a stream, as measured on a map, aerial photograph or other horizontal plane. Also called catchment area, watershed, and basin.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA): In the context of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Watershed Management Initiative, this represents a grouping of smaller watersheds into a larger area for identifying and addressing water quality problems, e.g., the Humboldt WMA includes all watersheds draining to the ocean or bays north of the Eel River to and including Redwood Creek.

WEIR: A barrier constructed across a stream to divert fish into a trap.

WETLAND: An area subjected to periodic inundation, usually with soil and vegetative characteristics that separate it from adjoining non-inundated areas.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR: Linear spaces that connect the various areas of an animal's habitat; links between feeding, watering, resting, and breeding places.